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Parks and Recreation Minutes 10/10/2000

Tuesday, October 10, 2000

The Parks and Recreation Commission meeting came to order at 7:30 PM in the Whittemore Robbins House. Commission members in attendance included Joe Carabello, Bernice Jones, Don Vitters and Mary Tegan. Also present were Superintendent of Recreation Joseph Connelly and Mark Shea of the Department of Public Works.

Public in attendance included: Arthur Ales, Ron Beaudoin, Elizabeth Crosby, Elizabeth Dodge, Elizabeth Murray, Shelia Crosby, Al Tiehurst, Jeanne Leary, Barbara Murphy, Holly Kennedy and Jack Lepore.

Rink Improvement Subcommittee Summary

Mr. Ales and Mr. Connelly reviewed the minutes from the first subcommittee meeting. Mr. Ales highlighted the fact that Jack Kelly was elected Vice Chairperson and he was elected Chairperson. Mr. Ales reviewed the responsibilities of the subcommittee. Mr. Ales explained that the subcommittee toured the facility and Mr. Robert McKeown, Facility Supervisor summarized possible capital projects. Mr. Ales did state that subcommittee member Dan Shine would like to see another ice surface added to the existing complex. Mr. Ales commented on the positives and negatives of this suggestion. The Committee briefly discussed where this second ice surface would be placed. Mr. Carabello asked Mr. Ales questions regarding the current conditions of the rink. Mr. Ales commented that the facility was in dire need of supply and storage space. Mr. Ales stated that the subcommittee would be meeting monthly and he would be updating the Commission at each meeting.

Crosby Family Memorial Bench Request Spy Pond

Elizabeth Crosby summarized the family's request for a bench and tree to be placed at Spy Pond in memory of her husband John J. Crosby. The Commission discussed the plans to renovate Spy Pond. The Commission discussed the placement of the bench and tree with members of the Crosby family. The Crosby family suggested that a bench be placed on site now and the family holds off on planting a tree until a landscape architect is hired to coordinate the project. The Commission agreed and stated that the Family's plans could be integrated into the future landscaping plans through the landscape architect. The Commission discussed their request to the Capital Improvement Committee. The Committee reviewed the family's recommendation for the placement of the bench. Mr. Connelly stated that the family should be aware that the Town can not control vandalism, but will do all they can to assist with correcting any problems. Mr. Connelly also stated that the Town could not guarantee that the dedicated tree would receive the type of maintenance necessary to ensure the tree's survival. Mr. Connelly reviewed the purchasing process of the bench and plaque. Commission members will review the families recommended placement for the bench and will let Mr. Connelly know if this site is acceptable. Mr. Connelly will then contact the family. Mr. Connelly will also contact the family with the name of the hired landscape architect. Mrs. Tegan made the following motion; motion was seconded by Mr. Carabello and approved 4-0:

Move to allow the Crosby family to purchase a memorial bench and place the bench at the Crosby family's first choice upon final site approval by the Commission and involve the family in the landscape design phase of Spy Pond with regards to a memorial tree.

The Crosby family thanked the Commission and exited the meeting.

Request to Revisit Time of Lights at Summer Street Field

Mr. Connelly reviewed the Commission's previous decision to turn off the lights at Summer Street Field at 10 PM. Mr. Connelly summarized the request of Babe Ruth to revisit this issue. Mr. Connelly asked Mr. Beaudoin to speak on Babe Ruth's behalf. Mr. Beaudoin explained that the problem was with doubleheader games during the months of May and June. Mr. Beaudoin pointed out

that this was due to the fact that Arlington Catholic played their varsity baseball games on Summer Street field. Mr. Beaudoin explained that MIAA rules are that varsity games must be played to completion and that this often resulted in Babe Ruth games getting a late start. Mr. Beaudoin stated that Babe Ruth could eliminate double header games on evenings that Arlington Catholic had a home game, but it was the make-ups due to rain that presented the problem. The Commission asked Mr. Connelly if he could assist in this type of scheduling. Mr. Connelly stated that he could assist, however, the make-ups due to rain would be hard to communicate to Babe Ruth in time for them to cancel. The Commission and Mr. Beaudoin discussed other scheduling solutions. Various abutters gave their input to the time of the lights going off, trash, and noise levels after events and public drinking.

Ms. Leary presented the Commission with a petition signed by 31 abutters asking the Commission to enforce their previous decision. Ms. Kennedy re-iterated the abutters concerns. Mr. Beaudoin and the abutters discussed these issues with the Commission. Mrs. Tegan, Mrs. Jones and Mr. Carabello all stated that they supported their previous decision to turn the lights of at 10 PM. Mrs. Jones motioned to support the Park Commissioners previous decision to turn the lights of at 10 PM. The Commission agreed, but felt another motion was not necessary.

Mrs. Tegan asked Mr. Connelly to draft a letter to the Police Department and Arlington Sport Center users regarding loitering, trash, parking and public drinking.

The abutters and the Babe Ruth representatives exited the meeting.

The Commission continued discussion regarding the use of town fields by Arlington Catholic High School. The Commission also discussed the continuing expansion of in town youth leagues. Mr. Carabello made the following motion:

Move that the Park and Recreation Commission place a moratorium on fields for new leagues and league expansion. This moratorium would limit organizations to the same number of teams and fields in future years as they had in the year 2000.

Mr. Connelly stated that he did not feel this motion could be moved at this time. Mr. Connelly posed the following questions:

1. Did this include lacrosse? Lacrosse already told us they were expanding by three teams.
2. Did this include counting and keeping track of the number or teams in each youth group yearly?
3. Would this policy be legal?
4. How do you tell one group of tax payers that they cannot have a field and another group of taxpayers they can.

Mr. Connelly indicated that the Commission should first adopt a field scheduling policy that addressed some of the Commission concerns: scheduling priority, fees, organized league expansion, etc. The Commission agreed that this policy should be adopted and adopted quickly. Mr. Connelly stated that a draft would be in their next packets. Mr. Connelly stated that the policy should go through a public meeting process, Town Counsel and the Board of Selectmen.

The Commission briefly discussed the amount of time taken up by the Commission and the Superintendent of Recreation for parks and playgrounds. Mrs. Tegan indicated that another position funded by the tax base should be created to tackle only field issues.

Project Review: Hills Hill, Scannell Field, Robbins Farm, Thorndike Field, Parallel Playground

Mr. Connelly stated that the contracts for Hills Hill and Scannell Field have been awarded and work should begin any day. The Commission discussed the timing of seeding at Hills Hill. Mr. Connelly suggested that the project continue. Mr. Connelly stated that Andrew Leonard would be attending the November meeting to review the Robbins Farm design and possible Parallel Playground alterations. Mr. Vitters stated that the RFQ for design services for Thorndike Field has been sent out.

Mr. Vitters reminded Mr. Connelly an RFQ needed to be sent out for design services for Crosby Playground and Spy Pond. Mr. Vitters and Mr. Connelly will work on getting these out to bid.

Signs at Spy Pond Prohibiting Duck Feeding

Mr. Connelly stated the Caryn Cove of the Board of Selectmen's office asked that the Commissioners review signage regarding Article 13 of last April's Town Meeting. Article 13 passed Town Meeting, making it illegal to feed wild geese. The Commission asked who the enforcing authority was on this. Mr. Carabello indicated it was the Health Department's responsibility. The Commission asked Mr. Connelly to work with Marie Walsh on drafting appropriate language.

Request for Public Restroom at North Union Spray Pool

Mr. Connelly reviewed this request. The Commission felt strongly that due to the expense, maintenance issues and potential

vandalism that this request was not practical. The Commission stated that the parents have the responsibility to make sure their children do not go the bathroom in or around the facility in a public manner. It was pointed out that restrooms were not at any of the town's outdoor facilities.

Maintenance and Recreation Report

Mr. Carabello asked Mr. Shea question regarding irrigation systems this past season. Mr. Shea commented that besides some missing sprinkler heads, everything was fine.

Mr. Connelly reviewed his fundraising ideas with the Commission. Mr. Connelly explained the event and marketing surrounding the event. Mr. Connelly stated that telemarketing was the primary source of fundraising. Mr. Connelly wanted the Commission's support before proceeding. The Commission supported the event and suggested that it was important the residents become aware that the department is self-supporting.

Other Business

Mugar Property – The Commission discussed the possible development of this site.

Buzzell Fence and Trees – Mr. Vitters asked Mr. Shea to look into the tree line between the new housing development on the corner of Mill Street and Summer Street and Buzzell Field.

Cutter Playground – Mr. Shea reviewed the installation of the Brackett play equipment at Cutter Playground. Mr. Shea stated that the work should occur before the new year.

Ms. Jones motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Tegan, and approved 4-0.

The Commission adjourned at 10:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Joseph J. Connelly,
Superintendent of Recreation